

+ Masonic Oration *Howe's Whaler*



St. Peter's Lodge, June 24, 5796.

Unanimously voted, that the thanks of this Lodge, by a Committee, be presented to our worshipful Brother HOOPER, for the Oration delivered this day; and that said Committee request a Copy for the Press.

*THE Right Worshipful JONATHAN GAGE,
JOSHUA GREENLEAF, S. W. and GILMAN
WHITE, P. M. were chosen a Committee for this purpose.*

To the Committee of St. Peter's Lodge.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL AND BELOVED,

IN compliance with the request of the Brethren of St. Peter's Lodge, the Oration yesterday delivered, will again solicit the indulgence of the public.

With cordial wishes, for your prosperity and happiness, I am your Brother,

THOMAS W. HOOPER.

Newburyport, June 25, 5796.

A N
O R A T I O N,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Right Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren

• •
ST. PETER'S LODGE

• •
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,

At the Episcopal Church in *Newburyport*; on the Festival of St. JOHN the Baptist;

JUNE 24, 5796.

✓
By the Worshipful Brother THOMAS W. HOOPER, P. M.

PRINTED AT NEWBURYPORT BY BROTHERS BLUNT AND MARCH—5796.

O R A T I O N

Right Worshipful, Master, Warranted, and Brethren

G R A T I O

St. PETER'S LODGE

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS



A. the Principal Officer, in the Library of the British Museum

By the Secretary, J. H. M. J. H. M. J. H. M.

Printed by J. H. M. J. H. M. J. H. M.



O R A T I O N.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard : that went down to the skirts of his garments ; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion : for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

THESE were the expressions of a man, well acquainted with the pleasures, that arise from the cultivation of the social virtues. At a time, when the greatest part of the inhabitants of the world, are distressed by the horrors and devastations of war, this sentiment must afford a theme of pleasing contemplation to every generous mind.

And

And while I congratulate you, RIGHT WORSHIPFUL, WORSHIPFUL, and BELOVED BRETHREN, on the return of this anniversary, I feel a peculiar satisfaction, in the reflection, that the cultivation of these sentiments (which is the indispensable duty of every worthy Mason) will induce you to view, with indulgence, the errors of a hasty performance.

ON the cultivation of the social virtues, depends much of our real enjoyment. They tend to smoothe the rugged paths of life, and disarm affliction of its keenest weapons. They render man useful, respectable, and happy. They will at all times, prove unfading ornaments,---will ever enliven the gloom of adversity,---will add lustre to the sunshine of success. These virtues, are of more advantage to mankind, than those that are more dazzling and splendid. Courage and ambition attract admiration, and sometimes insure applause. But *Humanity*, *Benevolence* and *Charity*, while they yield serene, and peaceful pleasure, to the bosoms of their possessors, diffuse extended happiness to all around them. The Alexanders, and the Cæsars of the world, have almost universally overwhelmed

whelmed with misery and subjection, the age in which they lived. But the *humane*, the *charitable*, the *benevolent* man, by the steady practice of the plain, simple dictates of truth and morality, renders Society a more useful tribute, than the laurel'd Hero, or the scepter'd Monarch. These Virtues, indeed, demand no public notice ;---they ask no laboured panegyric ;---they resemble the silent showers of evening, which, though they fall unseen, yet deeply tinge the smiling fields with beauteous verdure.

MAN is a social being. Such are his faculties, that they droop, and wither, in the wilderness of solitude. They expand, they ripen, and are matured, in the garden of Society. Had not the wisdom of the Almighty intended man for Society, he would not have formed him, subject to such a variety of infirmities---infirmities, which would render life itself a burden, without the aid of mutual assistance. Hence would we infer the necessity, as well as the pleasure of social intercourse. We accordingly find, in the earliest stages of the world, societies were formed, and man became
connected

connected with man, for the purposes of protection, and improvement. Among the earliest of these associations, and coeval with the first dawn of improvement in the Sciences, and social virtues, is the *Ancient and honorable institution of Free Masonry*. Established on the most noble and liberal principles, at a period when man was yet uncorrupted by luxury, yet unnerved by excess, its object was improvement in the most useful Sciences, and the most generous Virtues. A Society, so happily calculated for improvement and happiness, could not fail of success. It has accordingly received the patronage of the good and great in every age. It has been the inseparable companion of Learning, Religion, and Freedom. Where these have flourished, there has this institution been honored. And where Gothic ignorance, and infidelity have triumphed, there has it been neglected and despised. It will be unnecessary at this time, minutely to trace its rise and progress. This bright constellation first arose in the EAST---it has illumined every part of the Globe---at length it enlightens, and irradiates this our Western Hemisphere. As the star, that discovered to the wise men of the east,

east, the place where our Saviour was born, so will we view it, as the planet that points us the road to Wisdom and to Virtue.---We will preserve the Institution, pure and unfulled, as it was transmitted to us---We will profit by its instructions---We will rigidly perform the duties it imposes---And we will bequeath it Posterity as a rich, a lasting, an invaluable blessing.

THE duties inculcated by our excellent institution are plain and simple. The first is a sincere and unfeigned reverence for the Author of our Being. Who can view the Sun---the Moon---the extended Arch of Heaven? Who can behold the beauty---the Order---the Harmony of created nature? and forbear to express his Gratitude to the Almighty Architect, who spake them into existence.

" Weigh then the Powers of simple PIETY !

" Make it the keystone in your arch of Virtue ;

" And it will keep that graceful fabrick firm,

" Though all the storms of fortune burst upon it."

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NEXT

NEXT should we cultivate the principles of universal benevolence, and brotherly affection. We should extend our offices of Friendship, not to our Brethren only, but the whole world of mankind. For brotherly love, is not that selfish sentiment, which leads us to confine our benefits to the narrow circle of our connexions only. It is that generous principle of the soul, which respects the whole human species, as one Family---and consequently as having claims on the assistance of each other, to discharge which, is only DUTY.

SINCERITY is another shining Jewel of Masonry. We should be "*Good Men, and true.*" Hypocrisy and deceit, are inconsistent with our professions. While truth and sincerity, promote the harmony of the brethren, and will render us acceptable in the sight of that BEING, "who seeth in secret."

To these virtues, we should add another. It is Charity.

If

If we have abundance, we should part from it, liberally, for the relief of others. If we are destitute ourselves, we should render our mite, which will be equally acceptable to him, "*who judgeth not as man judgeth.*" Like the Priest and the Levite, we should not turn away from the distresses of any of our brethren of mankind. But, like the good Samaritan, we should administer the oil and wine of comfort and relief to their necessities.

To name all our Masonic duties, would comprehend the whole system of morality. One more, then, only, shall be mentioned. It is Secrecy. This Virtue is as useful in the common concerns of life, as in Masonry. Brother has been made the enemy of Brother---and even the tender connexion of Father and Son, has oftentimes been broken by an ill timed breach of confidence. But useful as is this Virtue, our Fraternity have constantly been abused, by the weak and ignorant, for their steady adherence to it. To the empty babbler, who prates, he knows not why---To the canting hypocrite,
who,

who, *ostensibly* devotes one day to the service of his Maker--- and in *reality*, employs the next to murder the reputation of his neighbour—To these, the Secrets of Free Masonry have afforded a constant topic, for contempt and ridicule. And what are these famed secrets? If a brother in necessity, seeks relief, it is *an inviolable secret*, for “Charity vaunteth not itself.” If an overtaken brother be admonished, it is a secret, “for Charity is kind.” If possibly, little differences may invade our peaceful walls, these are secrets; for “Charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked, thinketh not unkindly.” The forms and ceremonies of our Society are indeed secrets; if they were not, we could not possibly maintain our connexion with our brethren of foreign nations; and should thus divest our institution of one of its principal advantages. If any apology were necessary for these secrets, we might plead universal custom. There is no Society without them. There are Secrets of State. And though in the present degenerate age, they have been

been promulgated, by men, destitute of principle and virtue ; the bad consequences of such breach of confidence, affords a specious argument, in favor of this useful virtue.

ANOTHER objection made to our institution is, that those of the other sex are not admitted to participate its benefits. "It may be observed, that, as the institution originated from one of the most laborious occupations, its metaphors, and ceremonies, are by no means adapted to their dispositions and habits." It is not from any want of respect to the sex---none can feel for them a more sincere attachment, than a Free, and Accepted Mason---It is not from the mistaken idea, that they cannot keep our secrets.---It is for the same reason that they do not command in armies, or preside in Courts of Justice. Theirs are the milder virtues. We feel, and we acknowledge their influence. It resembles the gentle, though powerful attraction of the moon. They rule, and they govern, the tide of human happiness.

IN the present state of weakness and infirmity, perfection is not to be expected. "To err is human." It has been objected, that Masons do not always live agreeable to their professions. Undeniable, as is this truth, it is no argument against the institution itself. As well might we despise the heavenly doctrines of christianity, because some of its professors have violated its sacred laws. And, with the same propriety, might we withdraw our confidence, from the whole human race, because an individual has been guilty of dishonesty. But, if we have been disgraced by some, who have walked unworthy their profession, so likewise have we been honored by many, who would reflect credit on any Society. The greatest characters in the world have laid aside their dignities, and put themselves on a level with us. The illustrious President of United America, acknowledges himself a Free and Accepted Mason——And he whose honored remains are deposited on the heights of Charlestown, once presided

fided with dignity, in the Grand Lodge of the State of Massachusetts.

ANIMATED by such illustrious examples, let us my Brethren, endeavour to fulfil the design of our excellent institution, by walking conformably to its precepts. May the pure and genuine principles of *Justice, Benevolence, Charity, and Sincerity*, influence and direct our conduct. Let us in an especial manner, cultivate with assiduity, the social virtues. Let us deal justly, and honorably with all men. Let us live within the *Compass*---let us act on the *Square*. Thus shall we render our Society, respectable in the eyes of the world. Thus shall we honor an institution, founded in *Wisdom*,---supported by *Strength*---adorned with *Beauty*. Thus shall we secure to ourselves, a conscience, void of offence, that will be to us, as a cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night, that will conduct us safely, thro' the dreary wilderness of trouble and affliction. And by such conduct, shall we be enabled

abled to spread abroad, those genuine principles, of benevolence, and philanthropy, which may be the humble means of hastening that happy, promised period, when man shall no longer be the enemy, but the friend---the brother of man, "when the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb---the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid," "and the Calf--and the young Lion, and the fatling together," "when nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall molest, or make them afraid."



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